

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:SMOREYBELL:JVC

APPROVED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY

S/AB:EBUNKER

S/PRS:RANDERSON

ARA:WROGERS

S/S - MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 181058 TOSEC 080222

NODIS

-STADIS////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: PANAMA - PROPOSED CONTINGENCY
STATEMENT (S/S NO.7515467)

REF:TOSEC 080205

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ROGERS

A. PROBLEM: WE CANNOT COUNT ON TORRIJOS EITHER DELAYING
OR ABANDONING THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE IS RECALLING HIS
AMBASSADOR HERE. WE SHOULD BE READY WITH A RESPONSE TO
MEDIA QUERIES. I SHOULD LIKE YOUR APPROVAL.

B. DISCUSSION:

1. PRECISELY HOW TORRIJOS WILL "PLAY" THIS ANNOUNCEMENT
WE CANNOT PREDICT. BUT THE THRUST WILL SURELY BE THAT
THE UNITED STATES HAS DRAGGED ITS BUREAUCRATIC FEET AND
ALSO ALLOWED DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS TO OVER-
RIDE FOREIGN POLICY ONES, THEREBY PRODUCING A VIRTUAL

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BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS.

2. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD COUNTER THAT THRUST BY:

-- ADOPTING A "PUZZLED" POSTURE, AND ESTABLISHING THAT NO BREAKDOWN HAS OCCURRED;

-- ALLOWING THE INFERENCE THAT PANAMA'S ACTION RESULTS FROM A DEGREE OF IMPATIENCE INCONSISTENT WITH THE NEED TO WORK OUT CAREFULLY ALL THE MANY COMPLEX ISSUES; AND

-- REITERATING DECISIVELY THE PRESIDENT'S INTENTIONS RESPECTING THE NEGOTIATIONS.

-- STRESSING THAT THIS IS THE OCCASION FOR A FIRM, "LET-US-GET-ON-WITH-THE-WORK" APPROACH.

3. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WOULD BE TAILORED TO THE EXACT TEXT OF ANY PANAMANIAN ANNOUNCEMENT.

C. RECOMMENDATION: THAT YOU APPROVE A STATEMENT ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES FOR CONTINGENCY USE BY THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN:

BEGIN QUOTE: THE UNITED STATES IS PERPLEXED BY THIS ACTION ON PANAMA'S PART.

"THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT IS AWARE THAT THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS HAVE BEEN CONSULTING WITHIN THEIR GOVERNMENT, IN PREPARATION FOR FUTURE NEGOTIATING ROUNDS.

"THE ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THOSE ROUNDS ARE EXCEEDINGLY COMPLEX AND DELICATE. THAT IS BECAUSE THE PARTIES ARE SEEKING, NOT SIMPLY TO MODERNIZE THE EXISTING TREATY ARRANGEMENTS BUT, RATHER, TO CREATE AN ENTIRELY NEW -- AND EQUITABLE -- RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRIES WITH RESPECT TO THE PANAMA CANAL.

"TO ACIEVE THAT RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES HARMONIZING CONFLICTING PANAMANIAN AND AMERICAN INTERESTS OVER A BROAD RANGE OF ISSUES. CONSEQUENTLY OUR NEGOTIATORS' CONSULTA-
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TIONS HAVE HAD TO BE EXTENSIVE. IT HAS ALSO BEEN ADVISABLE FOR THEM TO CONSULT WITH THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, MUCH AS THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN CONSULTING WITH ITS LEGISLATIVE BRANCH.

"OVER THE COURSE OF THESE CONSULTATIONS, THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS HAVE BEEN ATTENTIVE TO THE REPEATED EXPRESSIONS OF SENIOR PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS, CAUTIONING THAT IT

IS NOT THE PACE OF NEGOTIATION WHICH IS IMPORTANT BUT, RATHER, THE RESOLUTION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. THE UNITED STATES HAS ALSO BELIEVED, AND CONTINUES TO BELIEVE, THAT IT IS PRUDENT TO MOVE CAREFULLY AND METHODICALLY IN THE SEARCH FOR SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENT.

"THE NEGOTIATORS' CONSULTATIONS ARE NOW VIRTUALLY COMPLETE. THEY EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO RESUME THEIR TALKS IN PANAMA WITHIN A MATTER OF WEEKS. THEY UNDERSTAND THEY WILL BE WELCOME, THIS RECENT ACTION OF PANAMA'S GOVERNMENT NOTWITHSTANDING.

"THEY WILL CARRY WITH THEM THE PRESIDENT'S INSTRUCTION THAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS PROCEED, ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES, IN A SERIOUS FASHION TO A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION. END QUOTE.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

CLEARED: AMB. BUNKER, AMB. ANDERSON, AND MR. INGERSOLL. INGERSOLL

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